1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

241 dug out with spades in the form of large, rough bricks, which are set out in rows to dry. The next spring, before sowing, these bricks are built into a long oven. The outside is plastered with mud, and after incense and boughs of cypress have been burned to propitiate the Spirit of the Earth, a fire is built in the oven. After it has burned for two days the "bricks" have crumbled into ashes. Men and women carry these ashes in baskets on their backs and scatter them on the fields that are to be sown. In some places this heavy work is done by the women alone.

241 782 Plowing and sowing begin on the propitious day and at the appointed hour designated in the old Chinese lunar calendar. Strips of red paper inscribed with auspicious Chinese characters are pasted on all the farming implements and on the horns of the oxen. Red, in the symbolism of the Chinese, is the color for joy, fertility, and good fortune.[3]

At the appointed hour the whole family, all in their best clothes, go to the fields. The procession is led by the head of the family, guiding a plow drawn by a pair of oxen. He plows a furrow in a large circle and then a cross within the circle in such a manner that when the second stroke of the cross is completed the heads of the oxen are pointing in the direction from which, according to geomantic divination, happiness and prosperity are expected to emanate during the year. This direction may vary from year to year. The family then steps into the center of the circle, kneels, and burns incense and boughs of cypress. The head of the family offers to the Spirit of the Earth a large, flat circular loaf of bread in the center of which there is a hole in which he plants incense sticks. The family prostrate themselves while the head of the family pours a libation of wine on the ground and sprinkles wine toward the "six corners" of the universe.[4] The bread is then divided into small pieces and each member of the family, and also the two oxen, are given a piece to eat on the spot. The remainder is broken into crumbs and thrown on the field. All then return home except those who complete the plowing and sowing begins as soon as the plowing is finished.

The Chinese in this region do not have this custom, and it is possible that the Monguors took it over from the Tibetans who have a similar ceremony of beginning the farming season by blessing the earth and asking the gods for a good harvest and for protection against hail.[5]

241 943 The Monguor field crops are barley, wheat, peas, rapeseed, colza, hemp, and potatoes. Very little millet is grown. When the Monguors plow a virgin field, they plant barley for the first six years and wheat only the seventh year, because the earth of such fields is too

[3] White (which for the Chinese is the color of mourning) is the traditional auspicious and noble color of the Mongols.—O. L.

[4] The four quarters of the compass; upward (for the sky), and downward (for below the surface of the earth).—O. L.

[5] MacDonald, *Mœurs et coûtumes tibétaines*, 229, Paris, Payot, 1930.

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1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

241 243 cold to grow wheat from the beginning and has first to be loosened up and warmed by the sun.

The customs connected with weeding during the growing season are especially worth noting. Men and women take part, the women going to the fields in their best clothes which they change for their working clothes when the work begins. Men and women squat on their heels and work along the furrows of grain, singing as they work. One group answers the songs sung by another group and from time to time all burst into laughter and giggles because these songs are licentious and full of sexual references. Sometimes a man or woman sings a solo, to which all reply in chorus. If a traveler should happen to pass, especially a woman, one of the workers who has a knack for making up a song impromptu will start to sing a description of the traveler, full of suggestive remarks about the supposed purpose of the traveler's journey, with endless lascivious verses about "the way of the lonely hind roaming in search of the stag," and so forth. Only the young people take part in this work, while their elders remain in the family courtyard.

241 533 584

This licentiousness is associated only with the weeding season. The Chinese of this region do not have a similar custom. There are comparable customs, however, in Tibet and also in Southeast Asia; and there were comparable customs among the ancient Sienpi and the ancient Turks. It is open to question whether the Shat'o brought the custom with them when they settled in the region or whether the Monguors learned it from the Tibetans[a] or the Sienpi.

241 The crops are either plucked by hand or harvested with a sickle, the work being done by both men and women. The threshing is done on the village threshing floor with a primitive stone roller pulled by oxen, horses, mules, or donkeys.

In addition to field agriculture there are small gardens close to each courtyard where the women plant vegetables such as onions, garlic, rape, leek, cabbage, pimento, spinach, watermelons, and cantaloupes.

PASTORAL ECONOMY

231 Livestock still rank as the second most important economic resource of the Monguors. They raise sheep, cows, horses, mules, donkeys, and pigs and wherever the pastures are sufficient they own as many sheep and cows as possible. Horses are important for prestige,

[a] For references to Southeast Asia (Annam, Cambodia, Laos, the White Tai, the Karens of Burma, the Angami Nagas of Assam, and the Miaos and Yaos of Southwest China), see Christopher Fürer-Haimendorff in *Anthropos* 30: 916, 1935. See also A. Lietard, *Les Lolo-p'o*, 152, Münster i. W., Achendorfsche Verlag, 1913, and D. Doutreligne in *Anthropos* 25: 163, 1930; also F. M. Savina, *Histoire des Miao*, 224, Hong Kong, Imprimerie des missions étrangères, 1930. For ancient China see H. Maspero, *La Chine antique*, 237, Paris, Boccard, 1927, and R. Granet, *La civilization chinoise* 1: 190, Paris, La renaissance du livre, 1929.

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